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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 003456

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PREF](#) [TU](#) [I2](#) [PKK](#)

SUBJECT: NON-KINETIC ACTION AGAINST THE PKK

REF: A. ANKARA 2314 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. STATE 110631

Classified By: Ambassador Eric S. Edelman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) As I prepare to depart Ankara, I am leaving behind one serious piece of unfinished business: the PKK's continued and apparently unmolested and unchallenged presence in northern Iraq. This problem is especially irksome because in recent months the PKK has resumed its active terror campaign in Turkey, claiming many lives (see ref a). The President forthrightly told Prime Minister Erdogan June 8 in Washington that our soldiers' hands were full in Iraq fighting the insurgency and training the ISF. I agree that kinetic action against the PKK is simply not our top priority at this time. But as ref a and many previous messages from Ankara point out, there are other, less dramatic steps that we and the ITG can take. It is difficult to explain to Turkey's leaders why we have taken so few of these.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) The Turks appreciate that MNF-I has promulgated a fragmentary order (FRAGO) listing PKK terrorists in Iraq and instructing CF to pick these people up if found in the course of normal operations, but they also note that the FRAGO has resulted in zero arrests. (NOTE: The existence of the FRAGO recently broke in the Turkish press. END NOTE.) Three times in the last week Prime Minister Erdogan has stated publicly but in general terms that the U.S. and Turkey are cooperating in intelligence sharing against the PKK (but the Turkish press has paid scant attention). With few recent actions we can point to, we have little to say when the Turks ask if we are still punishing them for their decision over two years ago not to allow us to use Turkey to attack Iraq from the north.

[1](#)3. (C) Turkey has overcome its fear and anger about the PKK (and the war in Iraq in general) to try to build a constructive policy which is supportive of Iraq's emerging democracy; this has been more in evidence since the Jan. 30 elections. The GOT's recent (albeit belated) approval of our request to use Incirlik Air Base as a multi-directional cargo hub is the latest, but by no means the only, recent manifestation of the Turks' improved attitude.

[1](#)4. (C) Yet as attacks and casualties mount in Turkey, the GOT will feel increasing pressure to take action against the PKK where the terrorist organization has its command and control structure: in northern Iraq. FonMin Gul told the Secretary June 8 that PKK attacks in Turkey this year have claimed the lives of 144 soldiers and police (ref b). I have said before that this would be a policy disaster for Turkey, but also for us and for the ITG as it struggles to deal with the insurgency and draft a constitution. An uninvited foreign power taking military action in the Kurdish north is the last thing any of us need.

[1](#)5. (S/NF) We--and the Iraqis--need to demonstrate our seriousness in dealing with this seemingly endless irritant. A kinetic attack against the heart of the PKK is not a priority at this time. But as we have suggested before, there are other, much less costly options available to us:

FOR THE ITG:

--Declare the PKK officially a terrorist organization;

--Declare the Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party a PKK front party and close down its offices in Iraqi cities;

--Issue Iraqi arrest warrants for PKK leaders known to be in Iraq (the leaders have already been listed in MNF-I lookouts);

--When ISF manpower levels permit, work with UNHCR and Turkey to secure Makhmour refugee camp and pursue an orderly process for durable solutions, including repatriation.

FOR THE ITG AND US TOGETHER:

--Shut off PKK supply lines and (to the extent possible) secure the Iraqi border in areas where the PKK/Kongra-Gel is present;

--Work with the ITG and KRG to encourage the KDP and the PUK to make statements condemning the PKK and to take steps to

limit the movement and resupply of PKK cadres and camps;

--Initiate with Turkey a joint information operation designed to take advantage of the splits within the PKK and to further weaken the organization.

FOR US:

--If we obtain solid intelligence that a PKK leader is close by our units, pick him up.

--Work with Turkey on a coordinated, comprehensive diplomatic and intelligence approach to European countries that allow the PKK and/or its affiliates to operate (fundraising, broadcasting, other support) on their soil.

--Consider once again offering assets to assist the Turks with border control and intelligence-gathering, but this time without strings that will make the Turks doubt our intentions.

16. (C) These steps are doable and they will serve our interests as well as Turkey's and Iraq's. The cost of inactivity will rise and we need to get ahead of this now.

17. (U) Iraq REOs minimize considered.
EDELMAN